

# BETHEL UNIVERSITY

## CAMPUS LIFE SURVEY

SPRING 2015

## Retention Items

**Summary.** Items related to retention were included for the first time in the spring Campus Life Survey. The initial distribution of the survey was May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and the survey closed on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. We had N = 1144 CAS students complete some portion of the survey, while N=990 CAS students completed the entire survey. There was a good distribution of responses from all class levels:

Answer	Response	%
Freshman	204	20%
Sophomore	231	23%
Junior	218	22%
Senior, not graduating in May 2015	106	11%
Graduating Senior	238	24%
Total	997	100%

### Primary Findings

- **95% of students surveyed said they planned to return** to Bethel in the fall semester (note that this item was not displayed to graduating seniors). This is not to say that our retention rate was 95%. Certainly students who are not planning to return to Bethel are probably less likely to complete the Campus Life Survey.
- Students who were not returning were asked **why they were not coming back to Bethel**. They had options of responses to choose from but also were given a text box to provide a more specific reason. Two of the most frequently cited reasons were financial in nature: *Financial cost is too much* (21 students) and *Amassing too much student loan debt* (15 students). The other two most frequently cited reasons had more to do with social aspects of Bethel: *Bethel is just not the right “fit” for me* (19 students) and *It is hard to fit in socially at Bethel* (14 students). Interestingly, the majority of students who selected “Financial cost is too much” also selected “Bethel is just not the right fit for me” (16 out of 21, 76%) and “It is hard to fit in social at Bethel (11/21; 52%). **So for many who are not returning, finances are a reason but often not the only reason.**



- Interestingly, students were more likely to say they were not coming back in the fall because **Bethel was too religious** (16%) or **too conservative** (14%) rather than too liberal (3%) or not religious enough (5%; see table for item 40 below).
- Not surprisingly, students who **are not returning in the fall are significantly less satisfied with most aspects of their Bethel experience**: faith integration in courses, advising, educational experience in their major, Bethel's environment to help with their spiritual growth, leadership development, community life experience, and overall educational experience.
- Students not returning in the fall also gave lower ratings to the "academic challenge" in their major.
- The **University of Minnesota is the institution where most of the students are transferring** to (9 students; 31%). NDSU (2 students; 7%) was next. Only one was planning on transferring to Northwestern (St. Paul). See the full list in the table under item 41 below. It is hard to know if both of the Concordia's listed are Concordia-Moorhead (one is for sure).
- All students were also asked the following question: *"Have you ever seriously considered leaving Bethel before graduating? (e.g., transferring to another institution or dropping out of college altogether)"* **41% replied "Yes" to this item.** (See table under item 42 below.)
- Those who replied yes to the above item were asked **"Why did you decide to stay?"** The most frequently cited answer was **Bethel friends encouraged me to stay** (38%). Next was the *Other* category (31%), followed by **Realized I could graduate quicker at Bethel** (30%), **Realized I would miss the Bethel community** (29%), **Became more comfortable at Bethel** (29%), and **Family encouraged me to stay** (28%). See table for Item 43 below. Also see the table with the "Other" responses. A wide range of responses were given. Some expressed that transferring would be too much of a hassle, others said God called them to stay, some said it was the relationships with faculty, others because of the sports teams at Bethel, etc.
- **Students of color were just as likely as white students to say they planned to return to Bethel** in the fall semester. However, **students of color were significantly more likely to say that they have considered leaving Bethel.** This **same pattern** emerged for **multilingual students and students with disabilities.**
- Students who **have considered leaving Bethel have lower GPAs** compared to those who have not considered leaving Bethel. However, **those not returning to Bethel in the fall have similar GPAs** to those who are returning in the fall.
- Students who **consume alcohol while at Bethel were significantly more likely to say they have thought of leaving Bethel.** Additionally, the more often they consumed alcohol, the more likely they were to have considered leaving Bethel.

- Similar to the results for students not returning to Bethel in the fall, **students who have considered leaving Bethel were significantly less satisfied with most aspects of their Bethel experience**: faith integration in courses, advising, educational experience in their major, Bethel's environment to help with their spiritual growth, leadership development, community life experience, and overall educational experience.



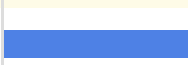
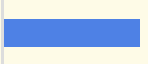









39. Do you plan to return to Bethel next Fall Semester?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	727	95%
2	No	37	5%
	Total	764	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.05
Variance	0.05
Standard Deviation	0.21
Total Responses	764

40. Why are you not continuing your education at Bethel? Choose all that apply.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Financial cost is too much.	21	57%
2	Amassing too much student loan debt going to Bethel.	15	41%
3	Could not get into the program that I wanted to get into (e.g. Nursing)	0	0%
4	Bethel is too "spiritual" or "religious" for me.	6	16%
5	Bethel is not "spiritual" or "religious" enough for me.	2	5%

6	Bethel is too conservative for me.		5	14%
7	Bethel is too liberal for me.		1	3%
8	Bethel is just not a right "fit" for me.		19	51%
9	It is hard to fit in socially at Bethel.		14	38%
10	My grades are too low at Bethel.		2	5%
11	Bethel is too academically rigorous for me.		2	5%
12	Bethel is not academically rigorous enough for me.		7	19%
13	Bethel does not have my major.		8	22%
14	I'm taking a break from college altogether.		2	5%
15	Other		15	41%
16	Want to leave Minnesota		6	16%
17	Bethel is too small of a university for me.		7	19%
18	Bethel is too big of a university for me.		0	0%

Other

Student Life, RD, RAs

3-2 program

music program

I want to be in a college where I can actively practice evangelism and discipleship, so I will be attending the U of M in the fall in order to better reach the lost.

Not enough activities to be a part of. A pool would be great.

residence life

Dual degree program

I was PSEO. Deciding on a different college, that's all.

It is extremely hard to fit socially at Bethel.

Stop out, to take a class at a cheaper school

I already explained.

I was given a large scholarship to Concordia College and the decision between Concordia and Bethel came down to a financial decision

Hockey

41. If you are transferring to another institution, which institution are you transferring to?

Text Response
University of Alabama
Wheaton College
Undecided
NDSU
Biola University (Possibly)
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
University of Minnesota
Minnesota School of Business
University of Illinois
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Robert Morris University
Concordia College
undecided
UWRF
Marquette University
Metro State
UMass Boston
UMN Twin cities
University of Minnesota
University of Northwestern St. Paul
The University of Minnesota
Minneapolis community and technical college
Covenant College
Hamline
University of Minnesota
Concordia College Moorhead
University of Minnesota
North Dakota State University
U of M

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	29

42. Have you ever seriously considered leaving Bethel before graduating? (e.g., transferring to another institution or dropping out of college altogether)

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	413	41%
2	No	585	59%
	Total	998	100%

43. Why did you decide to stay? Choose all that apply.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Became more comfortable at Bethel.	115	29%
2	Realized I could graduate quicker at Bethel.	120	30%
3	Bethel friends encouraged me to stay.	151	38%
4	Faculty or staff encouraged me to stay.	66	17%
5	Realized I could make it work financially.	75	19%
6	Didn't want to lose the faith aspect of Bethel.	101	25%
7	Found a program/major that I like.	101	25%
8	Family encouraged me to stay.	111	28%
9	Realized I would miss the Bethel community.	114	29%
10	Other	125	31%
11	People at my church encouraged me to stay.	9	2%

Other

I only have 2 years left, that is not that much.  
trying to see if I can get my GPA up so I can join the Education Department, if not, I will be transferring.

Cost, convenience

Became committed to too many things to leave.

I already paid too much

No idea why

Decided getting a college degree would be more beneficial in the long run

Studied abroad

I likely won't get into a program elsewhere because of my grades

Loved the athletic team that I was a part of

Was accepted into the nursing program

Too hard to transfer with Bethel's specific cour

Incredible opportunities and small communities in my majors; great personable professors

2014-15 is my first year at Bethel

Care of Faculty

Sports team

reaccepted into nursing program

I realized I could start a club to be more comfortable here and help others.

Became involved in leadership; found niche

Transferred to Bethel already and didn't want to do all the paperwork to transfer to a different school. Plus I don't want to push my graduation date further if I transferred.

I decided an education was the right choice for me

I didn't decide to stay

I have been given many crucial opportunities at Bethel that will help me get into grad school that I would not have enough time to get at a different school

Getting married and we decided it was best to stay

felt I couldn't leave my athletic team

RA job

Wanted to finish my major

I'm not staying

Was always pleased with the academics, so felt like the other reasons where not worth switching for

I was considering a 3-2 program anyway

Turned my grades around

God told me to stay

Study Abroad

Already in the nursing program

Parents wouldn't continue to financially support me if I transferred

Found friends I could connect with.

I could be a registered social worker by graduation here  
study abroad program

I strongly feel that I should stay here despite some issues I have

Other schools wouldn't really take my credits

The school with better scholarships didn't have nursing

Told myself it wouldn't be different anywhere else and just pushed through it because I knew graduating from college would provide way more opportunity than anything else I could do.

basketball

Bethel offered me better financial aid than my other options.

Did not want to go through the transferring process.

I am leaving Bethel.

Worked really hard to get in; didn't want to throw my progress away

God called me to stay.

I only have one semester left. I might as well stay and finish my degree. I will be the first one in my family to graduate from college.

Too many commitments next year

Theology minor is really cool. Also because of track and being an RA.

Athletics made me stay

Course work didn't transfer

England Term

Laziness/timidness

I didn't want to leave my friends

Too difficult to transfer and would take longer to get my degree.

The professors are amazing. They are the only reason I stayed.

Too hard to transfer credits.

I wanted to finish my degree so I could get a job without having to spend more money.

stuck here because credits didn't all transfer.

I didnt want to go through the hassle...

I never told people I wanted to leave. But I found the emotional and spiritual support that I needed in friends and faculty. I'm not sure if I would have stayed if I had been a Freshman when I began to significantly struggle with my faith.

I love the academic part of Bethel, just not really the people-but I stayed for the academics

My major (Engineering 3-2) makes me transfer, but I don't really want to leave. However, our program can only do so much here at Bethel if we want an engineering degree.

I live really close to Bethel. The on-campus living experience all but eliminated my fears that I would get stuck in a "hometown rut."

Already transferred after freshman year and realized I couldn't do that again. I also felt like it was mostly stress that caused me to want to drop out all together.

I want to make a difference here, and help change the problems that I perceive. :)

I would have left but was given a chance to play hockey, then the following semester was not given a chance... So I was lied to and basically stuck here.

I realized there were a lot of good things at Bethel that I had not previously realized.

I didn't want to loose the friendships and faculty relationships I had here.

I didn't get accepted to the other program



Parents didn't want to extend their financial support to me at other schools.  
Haven't had the energy to transfer  
Studied Abroad  
I didn't want to transfer again - found an organization that fueled my passions regardless of how I felt about some of the hypocrisy I saw at Bethel.  
It would be more time and money to transfer  
Did not want to make a harsh transition in the end.  
It'd be too difficult to transfer  
Didn't find a viable alternative  
Want to engage with Faculty  
Not staying  
Realized that I was only considering leaving to be with my now ex-girlfriend.  
sports  
Hope  
Cannot due to financial contract and scholarships  
I didn't know if Bethel's art program was actually good, but I realized that it is.  
Not sure what else I would do.  
Wasn't accepted at the other university  
Realized it was God's plan for me to get a degree before going off into the world  
I wanted to be challenged.  
Felt that this is where God called me to be  
Closer to home, already enrolled  
Credits hard to transfer. And you don't find faculty like this elsewhere, I've checked  
I took a year off of school to learn more about myself and God, so I felt prepared to be at Bethel.  
God  
I still feel as though I want to leave.  
Bethel Nursing Program  
Life circumstance changed  
Did not want to have to go to college for extra year if transferred  
bethel is my cheapest option and i doubt any employer would higher someone with only half a degree